Vanuatu signs framework, starts bilateral trade talks with China

By Doddy Morris in Shanghai, China Nov 6, 2025 0

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Vanuatu's Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Foreign Trade Marc Ati and China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao signed a framework to boost trade, investment, and development cooperation. Photos: Supplied

By Doddy Morris

Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade Marc Ati has taken a key step to advance Vanuatu's trade and economic partnership with China through the signing of the "Framework Agreement on Enhancing Economic Partnership" in Shanghai on 4 November 2025.

Speaking after the signing, Minister Ati described it as "a framework which begins the process and commencement of Vanuatu and China's bilateral trade. It is a non-binding agreement but is forward-looking, reflecting China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Pacific 2050 Strategy — a vision for a Blue Pacific Continent."

The Agreement outlines areas for future cooperation, including trade in goods and services, investment, and industrial and agricultural development. It also identifies principles, objectives, and institutional arrangements to guide future negotiations.

The agreement was signed after a collective meeting between China's Minister of Commerce, Wang Wentao, and ministers from five Pacific Island countries — the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Fiji, and Vanuatu. Vanuatu was represented by Minister Ati.

According to China's Ministry of Commerce, the Framework Agreement lays the foundation for future negotiations aimed at establishing formal bilateral trade agreements between China and the participating Pacific nations.

In accordance with the Framework Agreement, China has pledged to actively advance negotiations on specific trade and investment issues on a mutually beneficial basis while expanding high-standard opening-up. China also committed to sharing its vast market and development opportunities with Pacific Island countries, ensuring that the benefits of the agreement reach both businesses and communities as early as possible.

The Framework Agreement reflects China's broader effort to strengthen economic ties with Pacific Island nations and to build what it describes as a "China–Pacific Island community with a shared future."

For Vanuatu, the initiative presents new opportunities to attract investment, boost export capacity, and accelerate industrial and agricultural modernisation.

Officials believe this cooperation will help local businesses integrate into regional and global value chains and expand their reach into one of the world's largest markets.

The signing marks the start of formal discussions, with detailed negotiations on specific trade terms expected to follow in the coming months.

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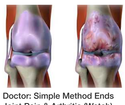

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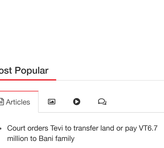

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